BG Rail Level Platform at Aralvaimozhi In Trivandram Division

2734. SHRI N. THALAVAI SUNDARAM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any step has been taken in raising of BG rail level platform for a length of 244M. at ARALVAIMOZHI in Trivandram Division;

(b) if so, by when it will be completed; and

(c) whether any work has been started or not?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Work for raising of platform to high level has been sanctioned at a cost of Rs. 15 lakh. Execution of the work is being taken up, and is expected to be completed by December, 1999.

Sale of impure mineral water bottles at the main stations in Delhi

2735. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: WUl the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that impure mineral water bottles are' being sold at the main stations in Delhi and that there have been complaints about selling of tap water in unsealed plastic bottles;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and;

(c) what action has been taken by Government to check this illegal trade of selling impure water at. the railway stations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (c) Sale of only authorised and short-listed brands of mineral water is permitted through railway outlets. Checks conducted by Northern Railway reveal that some unscrupulous elements/rag pickers indulge in recycling of mineral water bottles. Regular checks are undertaken by Northern Railway to prevent this menace. Efforts are also made for creating awareness amongst the passengers to crush used bottlles.

Setting up more Railway Zonal Offices in the Country

2736. SHRI NARESH YADAV: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Railway Minister in the previous Government had announced to set up more Railway Zonal offices in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the move for setting up such offices in Bihar has been formulated; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The previous Government has decided to set up six new Zonal Railways with headquarters at Bhubaneswar, Allahabad, Hajipur, Jaipur, Bangalore and Jabalpur.

(c) and (d) One Zonal Railway office in Bihar with headquarters at Hajpur known as East Central Railway is being set up.

Diversions in the Route of Kerala Mangal Express

2737. SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal under consideration of Government to stop plying of the Kerala-Mangala Express through Palghat Junction as per newspaper reports;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof;

(c) whether Government are aware of the fact that there is already a heavy rush of passengers embarking at Palghat and in case of diversion of the said train, it would cause a great deal of inconvenience to them; and

(d) whether Government are also aware that there is only one other train, namely Kerala Express passing through Palghat which will be unable to cope with the heavy rush especially during summer?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. It has j been decided to divert 2617/2618 Man-gale Express via Konkan Railway route in order to reduce the running time to Mangalore and to provide an additional daily train between Ernakulam/Alwaye/ Trichur and Delhi.

(c) For the convenience of Palghat passengers, the reservation quota is being increased in Kerala Express for Palghat to the extent possible.

(d) Apart from 2625/2626 Kerala Express, following weekly trains are also available from Palghat to Delhi.

(i) 6343/6344 Ernakulam-Nizamuddin Express.

(ii) 6317/6318 Kanniyakumari-Jammu Tawi Himsagar Express.

(iii) 6687/6688 Mangalore-Jammu Tawi Navyug Express.

Shatabdi trains incurring losses

2738. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether several shatabdi trains are incurring losses;

(b) if so, the details of Shatabdi trains running losses and the factors responsible therefor;

(c) whther the CAG has recently pointed out that the cost analysis of most of the Shatabdi trains has not worked out by Government; and

(d) if so, the fact thereof and the steps taken to discontiune the Shatabdi trains incurring losses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) The train-vise cost analysis is not done on the Railways.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The comptroller and Auditor General, in his report, has pointed out that out of the 14 Shatabdi Express Trains running on the Indian Railways, 4 trains running between Chen-nai-Mysore, Chennai-Coimbatore, How-rah-Rourkela and Howrah-Bokaro are incurring losses. Discontinuing these Shatabdi trains are not considered at present as the occupancy of these trains is expected to go up in the course of time.

Shortage of staff in reservation office in Southern Railway at Chennai

2739. SHRI N. THALAVAI SUNDARAM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that there is a shortage of staff in the emergency quota office in Southern Railway at Chennai;

(b) whether it is a fact that in Madurai and Chennai where even the letters are given to release the Emergency Quota by MP's and these are not released; and

(c) what action has been taken by the Southern Railway?

TEH MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The requests received from the Members of Parliament for release of berths^eats out of emergency Quota for their own journeys and in favour of their family members are mostly honured. Requests of Members of Parliament for allotting berths&eats from Emergency Quota for journey of others are considered on merit alongwith other requests taking into account factors like status of passengers travelling, nature of urgency like traveling on Government duty, bereavement in the family, sickness, etc. Since a large number of requests are received from various quarters, it is not feasible to accommodate all such requests.